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BOOK REVIEWS

The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and in the New. By ROGER BIGELOW MERRIMAN, Professor of History in Harvard University. 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1918. Pp. xxviii, 529; xv, 387. \$7.50.)

This is a work by a man of recognized standing in the American historical profession, putting forth his best efforts, in his chosen field. The most rigid standards of criticism should therefore be applied. But it may be said at the outset that Professor Merriman's volumes survive the test: indeed, it is not too much to say that they are a monument to American scholarship, and are easily the best work that has appeared in English, in recent years, in the field of Spanish history.

Professor Merriman "aims to show the continuity of the story of the reconquest of Spain from the Moors and of the conquest of her vast dominions beyond the seas". In other words, this is a history of expansion, of empire in the present-day sense of the word "imperialism". "To most Americans", says Professor Merriman, "the principal interest of the subject [the history of Spain] will inevitably centre around Spain's activities as a great conquering and colonizing power; for the increased importance of the countries of Iberian origin has been perhaps the most remarkable political and economic fact in the recent development of the Western Hemisphere" (I. vii). This statement and the very title of the book lead one to expect an interpretation of Spanish imperialism from the American point of view, involving an allotment of perhaps the major part of the space to the Castilian-conquered New World. The expectation is not realized, however. Professor Merriman distinctly looks beyond the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean to Europe, rather than westward across the Atlantic.

This stands forth clearly in the proportions of the two volumes thus far published. Volume I. is entitled *The Middle Ages*, and is subdivided into Book I. on "Castile" and Book II. on "The Realms of the Crown of Aragon". An introductory chapter carries the general history of Spain to 711, and goes on to deal briefly with the Moslem kingdoms to 1257. Thereafter, there are eleven chapters (of greatly unequal length) of which two are concerned with the narrative of

Castilian conquest in Spain, one with early Castilian interest in the Canaries and the embassy to Tamerlane, four with the narrative of Aragonese conquest (almost wholly beyond the peninsula, in the Mediterranean), and two each with the institutions (mainly political) of Castile and Aragon. Volume II. is entitled *The Catholic Kings*, and is subdivided in turn into Book III., "Union", and Book IV., "Expansion". Of the nine chapters, dealing now with the united kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, seven are narrative, with three of the longest referring almost exclusively to the European projects of John II. of Aragon and Ferdinand the Catholic. The internal pacification of the two kingdoms and the conquest of Granada, and conquests, respectively, in the Canaries, the Indies, and North Africa make up the other four narrative chapters, while the two on institutions are devoted chiefly to political conditions in Castile. The chapter on the Indies (in forty-eight pages), the only one in the book concerning the Americas, is a conventional account, admirably presented, of the discovery of Columbus, the explorations and settlements of his successors, and brief comment on the economic and political relations of Spain and her colonies and on Spanish treatment of the Indians.

In a history with a more distinct leaning toward the Americas the chapter and a half (some forty pages) on the conquest of the Canaries would occasion no surprise, but where only slightly more space is given to the Indies themselves in the era of the Catholic Kings the prominence of the former is decidedly noticeable, although these chapters are intensely interesting. Similarly, even in a history of empire, one might object to the space and amount of detail accorded to such matters as the embassy to Tamerlane and the spectacular tale of the Catalan Grand Company. On the other hand, those events have been slighted by other historians, and the account of them here is fascinating. In referring to the career of Aragon in the Mediterranean Professor Merriman says: "This remarkable story of territorial expansion deserves the most prominent place in the mediaeval portion of any history of the Spanish Empire" (I. 311). Such a place, surely, it has received in the author's work. Many, however, will question the exclusive validity of Professor Merriman's interpretation. Not a few would prefer a greater emphasis on the social, economic, and intellectual life, as well as the political institutions, of Moslem Spain and Christian Castile, on the ground that the gift of Spanish civilization was the greatest result of Spain's empire. Certainly, those who are more strictly Americanists would choose to have that side brought out.

One wonders, indeed, if Professor Merriman fully grasps the significance of Spanish conquest in the New World. For example, is it necessary to insist on the "failings as a ruler of men" (II. 223) of Christopher Columbus? Setting out with the super-optimistic hopes so characteristic of the age, believing that he would find riches and adventure such as would make the fabled experiences of Amadís de Gaula pale into insignificance in comparison, he encountered the incalculable difficulties of holding a new country. Hundreds of able men after his time, with a better understanding of conditions than it was possible for him to have, were to meet with no greater success. Again, the author appears to believe that the acquisition of the Americas by Spain injured her future in Europe, although he admits "it was the Indies that account for her greatness" (II. 236). Others would be inclined to say that it was the attempt at European empire which upset Spain, holding that she might have banished herself from Europe, much as England did, and made the colonies the basis of her permanence and greatness. In fine, Professor Merriman's point of view resembles that of his historical forefathers, William Robertson and Prescott, regarding empire as a matter of diplomacy and military conquest, concerned with the deeds of personages of the realm rather than the life of the people, though on the score of political institutions the author is abreast of the new school as to the content of history.

Professor Merriman plans to complete his work in two more volumes (*The Emperor* and *Philip the Prudent*, according to the publisher's announcement), carrying the story to 1598. To be sure, the greater part of the effective occupation of the Americas took place after 1598, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as is being amply proved by the students in the Bolton school of American history. It is true, however, that the close of the sixteenth century marked the beginning of the "decline and fall" of the Spanish Empire, and the author is within his rights in choosing to leave that tale to others.

There is no special sanctity in a given interpretation of a nation's history, and Professor Merriman has as much right to his as others to theirs. Accepting, then, his point of view, the reviewer wishes to emphasize the many merits of his work. Everything the author has touched he has handled exceedingly well. Taken as a whole, the two volumes at hand are the best in print on the beginnings of the Spanish Empire in Europe, and are a valuable background for the story of the conquests in the New World. They show, better than any other work has done, the complication of interests in the "loose-jointed,

heterogeneous empire", pulling Spain in more ways than she could go. Taken in detail there is much incidental contribution, such for example as the narrative accounts of Spanish conquests in the Canaries, North Africa, the islands of the Mediterranean, Italy, and Greece (involving some consideration of the Spanish methods of governing these dependencies), of the embassy to Tamerlane, the relations of Castile and Portugal (with an illuminating discussion of their possibilities and actual consequences), the imperial importance of the work of John II. of Aragon and Ferdinand the Catholic, and the treatment of such institutions as the *Consejo Real*, the *Cortes*, finances, the *Hermandad* of 1468, the *residencia*, and especially the *corregidor*. Generally speaking, the material is not new, but much of it appears in English, in a history of Spain, for the first time, and it is given in such a remarkably logical and pleasing form as to be a contribution from the standpoint of organization and presentation.

Professor Merriman never forgets that he is writing a history of expansion, and this is just as clear when, for example, he is dealing with the *corregidores* of Castile as it is when he is discussing the Spanish conquests in Italy. The book grows logically out of the Introduction. There the author emphasizes the fact that Spain's natural boundaries have not been barriers, and then proceeds to show the close connection of Spain in the pre-Moslem period with the outside world. The same sense of form appears in each chapter and even in each paragraph. Indeed, the whole book is so carefully thought out that the labor of the reader is reduced to a minimum, and chapters of fifty and sixty pages are quickly and easily covered. Lecturers on Spanish history will often be tempted to take Professor Merriman's chapters just as they stand.

On the score of his materials Professor Merriman says: "The first two volumes . . . are almost exclusively based on printed sources and standard secondary works" (I. viii). This course he justifies on the score of the vastness of the field to be covered and of the fact that much documentary material exists in print which is almost unknown, except to Spanish scholars. Much use of unpublished manuscripts is promised for the two later volumes. Professor Merriman intimates that he will not provide his completed work with a formal bibliography, holding that a "mere list of titles" without "some indication of their merits, defects, and relative importance" is "a rather specious credential of erudition" (I. ix). The reviewer believes there is considerable value in a well-arranged, clearly-presented list, and

hopes that the author will eventually decide to make one. Nevertheless, important bibliographical material appears.

Following the Introduction, there is a "Note on the General Authorities on Spanish History", and the Introduction itself, and each chapter thereafter, has a "Bibliographical Note", divided between "Contemporary Authorities" and "Later Works". The "General Authorities" include bibliographies, general collections of sources, general histories of Spain, and periodicals. Items are lumped together in paragraphs, and therefore do not stand out to the eye, but the critical comments and the list (though brief) are, taken together, the most illuminating general bibliography of Spanish history that has ever appeared in English. The separate chapters are based, in most cases, on a few printed works, but of such a kind that they apply in the chapter where they are employed and nowhere else. This is clearly the result of a careful selection of what is best for the matter in hand, for the author shows in his critical comments that he is thoroughly familiar with works which he has used only incidentally. The sum total of sources for all the chapters is great in number and of broad range. Furthermore, in the chapters dealing with Mediterranean expansion and the diplomatic intrigues of John II. of Aragon and Ferdinand the Catholic, a field in which the author is at his best, a wide variety of materials is used. Criticism must be made, however, of the form of entry employed by the author. In the matter of capitalization his style is chaotic. It is consistent only in that nouns and adjectives are capitalized in Latin, German, and English titles, are not capitalized in French titles, and sometimes are and sometimes are not in Spanish titles.

No writer can expect to avoid making mistakes. Yet, on the side of error in statements of fact there is very little to criticize in Professor Merriman's two volumes. It is a bit overdrawn to say that "When the Visigoths arrived in Spain . . . they brought with them all their barbarian customs" (I. 236). Even in their law, which the author was then discussing, they had already been modified to some extent by contact with Rome. Objection may be made to such generalizations as the following: "The mediaeval history of Spain is first and foremost the history of a crusade. For nearly eight centuries the Christians of the North devoted themselves to the task of expelling the Moors from the peninsula . . . From the cave of Covadonga to the annexation of Portugal and her dominions in 1580 . . . the process of expansion is continuous" (I. 53). In fact, the reconquest was very far from being continuous, and it rarely partook of the character of a

crusade. The author's own account, when taken in detail, is a convincing refutation of his more general statement. The reviewer doubts whether "The long centuries of colonial administration have been less thoroughly explored" (I. vii) than the recent periods of the Spanish American revolt from Spain and national independence. Surely it is a mistake to say that there was "almost no natural or geographical reason" (I. 75) for the political separation of Portugal from Spain. Cf. Charles de Lannoy, *L'Expansion Coloniale du Portugal* (in Charles de Lannoy and Herman Vander Linden, *Histoire de l'Expansion Coloniale des Peuples Européens . . . Portugal et Espagne*) pp. 1-5. The author takes the traditional view—rather accentuating it—of the "lamentable inefficiency" of Alfonso X, "the Scholar King". The important work of that monarch in the battle of absolutism against baronial anarchy might well have received some emphasis. We are informed that the accession of Ferdinand of Antequera to the Aragonese throne in 1412 was a great event, without which the "work of the Catholic Kings would in all probability have never been done" (I. 119). This is not explained, and seems a little strange when we are told on the same page that "The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon to Isabella of Castile in 1469 did not come as the inevitable sequel and logical climax of a long series of antecedents", but "rather as a divergence from the normal trend of the development of both nations" (I. 119).

In addition to what has been said in dealing with the bibliography, some criticisms may be made on the technical side of Professor Merriam's work. It is difficult to determine the author's rule of italicization. Ordinarily, Spanish institutional terms (e.g., *caballero*) are given in italics when first used and in romans thereafter. Some, however (e.g., the *alcabala* and other taxes, *adelantado*, *ricos hombres*), are consistently in italics, and others which in the main follow the first-named practice will occasionally reappear in italics (e.g., *corregidores* on pages 195 and 233 of volume one). A more distressing characteristic is the author's confused methods in the use of accents in Spanish words. Since he prefers to anglicize words whenever possible, there can be no quarrel with him if he does not use accents in Spanish words of very familiar usage in English (e.g., "Leon" and "Cadiz"). But since he many times uses accents in less well-known words which retain their Spanish form, one wonders why at other times he omits them. Why should "Fernández", "Jerónimo", and "Giménez" be accented, and "Hernández", "Gerónimo", and "Ximénez" not? On

what ground should "Ramón Bonifacio" get an accent, while "Ramón Berenguer", Ramón Lull", and "Ramón Moncada" do not? Why should "González" be accented on page 204, and fail to receive an accent elsewhere? Why not an accent on "desafío" and "señorío"? Why an accent at all on "Cangas"? Scores of other instances might be cited. In addition some minor typographical errors were not caught in proof (I. 21 n. 2, 67 n. 1, 68, 187, 251, n. 4, 258, 261, 262, 287. Not noted for v. II.). All of these matters, however, are minor in character as affecting the value of the book, and they can easily be changed in a second edition.

A number of excellent maps illustrate the wide-reaching text, and a good index is provided at the end of volume two. The book is the last word in the printer's art. Broad margins, generous spacing, and large-sized type join with the excellent English style of the author to make the volumes a pleasure to read. Decidedly, in the opinion of this reviewer, Professor Merriman's work is an important and welcome addition to the literature of Spanish history.

CHARLES E. CHAPMAN.

The Five Republics of Central America: Their political and economic development and their relations with the United States. By DANA G. MUNRO. [Printed . . . for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, of Washington, D. C.] (New York: Oxford University Press, American Branch, 1918. Pp. xviii, 332. \$3.50.)

This is one of the many useful books that have been, or in the future will be, published by the Carnegie Endowment with the general purpose of fostering closer interest and sympathy between the United States and the Hispanic American countries. In his preface the author explains the difficulties which confront the investigator into the history of Central America, of which the chief are the paucity of sources, either primary or secondary, and the unreliability of many of those which exist. In writing an account of the development of the Central American countries, one must decide whether he will deal with the countries all together or with each separately. In either case adequate treatment is impossible without considerable duplication and repetition. In some of his chapters Mr. Munro has followed one method and in others, the other.

In the first, on "The Country and the People" he studies the facts more or less common to all of the countries concerning topography, climate, products, industries, commerce, racial mixtures, social and